DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 377 287 UD 030 215

TITLE	African American Male Immersion Schools: Segregation? Separation? Or Innovation?
INSTITUTION	National Urban League, Inc., New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	Carnegie Corp. of New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	92
NOTE	39p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Black Students; Conferences; *Cultural Awareness; Cultural Differences; Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; Homogeneous Grouping; *Males; Models; *Racial Segregation; *Single Sex Schools; Urban Schools; Videotape Recordings
IDENTIFIERS	*African Americans; *Immersion Instructional Model

ABSTRACT

This document is the transcript of a videotape recording of a roundtable discussion that was produced with four panelists and a moderator and was intended to provide educators and professionals who work with African-American males an opportunity to explore the background of educational initiatives for black males. These gender- and race-specific academic programs represent efforts to meet the academic and cultural needs of African-American males. The immersion-school concept is one type of community response to the problems faced by African-American youth, particularly in the cities. The video explores the controversy surrounding these schools, and the recent judicial decisions that have ruled against them or that have caused them to be modified. Panelists examine a model that may strongly affect the positive development of school-age African-American males. Panelists were: (1) Richard J. Brown (moderator); (2) Jacqueline Berrien; (3) Roger L. Green; (4) Walteen Grady Truely; and (5) Michael Webb. (SLD)

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ED 377 287

NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE, INC.

Youth Services

African American Adolescent
Male Development Center

AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE IMMERSION SCHOOLS: SEGREGATION? SEPARATION? OR INNOVATION?

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AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE IMMERSION SCHOOLS: SEGREGATION? SEPARATION? OR INNOVATION?

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Introduction

The purpose of this roundtable is to provide educators and professionals who work with African American males an opportunity to explore the background of educational initiatives for Black males. These gender and race specific academic programs represent efforts to meet the academic and cultural needs of African American males. The video also examines the controversy surrounding the development of these schools and recent judicial decisions that have ruled against these models or caused them to be modified. Roundtable panelist examine a school model which many feel can have a significant impact on the positive development of school age African American males. A second goal of this roundtable is to present a balanced perspective on these school models and provide the opportunity for the viewer to make informed decisions on immersion school proposals.

Acknowledgements

We wish to express our appreciation to the panelist who contributed freely of their time, energy and intellectual resources to this critique of an important academic and cultural model. Their explanations and insightful commentary on this issue were central elements in the creation of this video.

A special thanks must go to the management and staff of Paragon Cable Manhattan who donated the time, equipment and technical expertise which made this documentary possible.

We also wish to thank Mr. Muzz Skillings for creating and producing the music for this video.

This video would not have been possible without the generous support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

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RICHARD J. BROWN: Good afternoon everyone. Today we are going to embark on a verbal exploration of one of the major concerns in the African American community and one which is of concern to others outside of the community who care about children, the African American family and the nation.

I would like the first portion of this session to concentrate on the condition of the African American male and those things which are responsible for the development of the concept of the African American Immersion School.

Assemblyman Green, you were very involved in developing a program for a school in New York City would you begin?

HON. ROGER L. GREEN: The name of the school is entitled "The Ujamaa Institute" which is due to open in September of 1992. It takes its name, literally translated from the Kiswahili word for family-hood. We [were] determined to organize this school because we felt that among other things we had to address the dissolution of our family structure, and that in doing so, one of the things that we needed to focus on . . . was the crisis that we found African American males in. [That] is not to suggest that we would not also focus on the current crisis that our young women are in. But it was clear to us that all of the empirical evidence demonstrated that our young men were in severe crisis; . . . increasing numbers of them dropped out of the public school system particularly at the age of sixteen. . The largest concentration of those who are incarcerated in our local and state correction facilities are in fact African American and Latino males.

In fact in New York State, of a total population of 57,000 inmates, 84 percent of them are primarily African American and Latino males between the ages of twenty (20) and twenty-six (26). In that population fifty 50 percent of them are functionally illiterate and then we see the deadly consequences of this back on the streets, where now we know that the leading cause of death for that population is homicide and the second leading cause of death is suicide.

So, we felt that we needed to have an appropriate response and we thought that this school called The Ujamaa Institute would do that.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Fine. Dr. Webb, as Director of Education for the Urban League, could you respond in terms of the reasons why the immersion school concept has developed?

MICHAEL WEBB: Well, as Assemblyman Green mentioned, there is a tremendous crisis that faces our young males, African American males. When you think that are more African American males in prison than there are in college, you begin to get an idea of the parameters of the problem.

In addition to not attending college, many African American males don't finish high school. If we look at the incidences of homicide in the African American community, and we look at the prevalence of males as perpetuators of homicides, then we realize that there is something that has to be done.

So, I think the crisis that faces our young males, and all of the aspects of their crisis created a need to do something different. It is clear that business as usual wasn't providing any kind of relief from this crisis. And I think that the schools are our response -- the community response to this crisis.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Ms. Berrien could we hear from you on this point?

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: Well I think that to begin the dialogue here is a bit difficult. I work in the women's rights area and my findings are that African American youth are in trouble based on a number of indicators -- economic and educational indicators.

By defining the issue as one of gender I think that we are disregarding about half of the problem. While it is true, that for example, there are more Black men in prison than there are in college, it is also true that since 1980 overall Black college enrollment has declined precipitously. And I believe that is largely attributable to shifts in federal policy that have affected the availability of financial aid, the availability of institutions of higher education to offer programs of enrichment and support that proved very successful in the latter part of the '60s and in the 1970s in enrolling and leading to the success of Black students male and female in higher education.

So, I believe that we need to define the issue as one of the crisis or the crises facing African American youth. And while there may be different manifestations in some ways between male and female youth, for example teen pregnancy rates for young women as opposed to incarceration rates for young men, I think that we do have to define the issue comprehensively.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Fine. One of the things that I want us all to remember is that this roundtable is making every effort to help educators, parents and other professionals to understand the immersion school concept and to be prepared to address the issue as it comes into their school or their school district and to be able to respond as they so choose.

Ms. Truely, could we have a response from you on this question?

WALTEEN GRADY TRUELY: I appreciate the fact that they we're holding this forum. I think it's a very important and it's interesting that you are asking us to address the development of the immersion school concept because I think there are many kinds of perspectives on what that development pattern is. And I must say that in my capacity as Director of the Project on Equal Education Rights of the NOW Legal Defense In Education Fund that my first information about an immersion school focus came from literature that I read about a proposal to start such a program in the Milwaukee Public Schools. My understanding of that particular program was that there would be an Afrocentric focus to the school. While initially there was a discussion about that concept of a gender specific concept for males -- that after some discussion and exploration of some of the civil rights laws that a decision was made, [on] an approach that was inclusive of both boys and girls would be most appropriate for that community.

I come to this broader area out of a background of having taught high school and working the early '70s in developing Black studies curriculum and women's studies curriculum. And I have a strong sense that in some ways this concept has -- is a concept that we've been pushed to move to because of the failure of school districts to really encompass and to embrace and to promote the development of specific course work that would be required. A failure of school districts to integrate concepts and understandings of African history and culture into courses that were called World History, United States History, United States Government. And I certainly understand the concept as a reflection of a failure of school districts to address the issue comprehensively. My sense is that in moving to an immersion school concept we still leave begging the question of systemic change. And I think that until we can deal with the issue of the systemic change that we are not addressing a critical issue for all students in this country.

RICHARD J. BROWN: And we will come back to that question...

WALTEEN GRADY TRUELY: Okay.

RICHARD J. BROWN: About changes within the system. There are two centers of controversy -- well there's more than two, but two key centers of controversy, the one you mentioned, the African as well as African American History and Culture as part of the curriculum and Assemblyman Green, this is also part of the program in Ujamaa.

HON. ROGER L. GREEN: Yes.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Could you tell us why you and other principals who are responsible for developing the program also felt that African American History and African History were important things -- history and culture were important to be taught in this setting.

HON. ROGER L. GREEN: Well, you know, first of all, I agree with Walteen in part, that it was a response to a failure of the school system, the local school boards and indeed the State Education Department to move forthrightly with the establishment on a truely Multi-cultural Curriculum that focused on cultural diversity of all people. But it was also done, I think, to embrace the reality of what I call the cultural democracy and that is that each people -- all people have the right to uplift and celebrate the contributions that they have made to society.

So we felt that was important and we also felt that what we needed to do among other things, that if in fact the school was to speak to the study of the family, that one of the critical things we wanted to do was focus on the study of the changes that have occurred historically in the African and Latino family structure and to look at that historically too.

If you will, to borrow a phrase from Cheik Anta Diop to talk about "historical memory" where we believe that becomes critical even in addressing questions of sexism that our young men and young woman must face in this generation. We called for some very basic things. For instance, in the humanities program that we would focus on the teachings of classical Black musical idioms, particularly the study of jazz. Working along with the Thelonious Monk Institute, -- and our position there was that of course this music has its roots in African and African American culture in our experience, but it is also -- it is part of the world culture now. But it is unfortunate that within American society that this is a particular musical idiom that is not in fact recognized as its own classical music and so we said we wanted to do that.

And then we talked about really in the broadest context -- when we deal with questions of constitutional history and law --that we did want to focus on those ideas, those individuals and those groups that came out of our experience, that is of the African and African American experience that helped to shape this constitution and we think that there is a lot to be said in terms of dealing with that. The 3/5ths of a man clause, questions surrounding the Dred Scott Decision, an examination of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments. The amendment that created voting rights for women who, within those struggles, came out of our communities to help shape those major changes in our constitution. The fact of the matter is that as we looked at the textbooks, as we looked at the syllabi, as we looked at the teaching methodologies that existed within the school systems to date, that was not occurring. And so we felt we needed to do that.

RICHARD J. BROWN: [Dr. Webb]. On this same question, but keeping in mi ıd that many people even -- African Americans are not so convinced that this subject should b taught to the extent that Roger spoke. Can you comment in a manner that those who are in ıuestion as to whether African American History should be taught -- with your experience on A frica, as well as your special interest in this area.

MICHAEL WEBB: Well, there is a fundamental issue here. Self-identity ıas often been tied to achievement in school. The person suffers from poor self-esteem has a low self-identity, sense of identity -- the person is not as likely to do well in school. And I hink that as a people, African American's have been put in a position of having low self-esteei ı.

Our history is often begun with slavery. And in terms of the more recent event: Martin Luther King Jr., some of the civil rights activists and events during the Civil Rights E a. We don't feel, as a people, that we have a history that is rooted as rich in terms of accompli ıments in many different fields; science, history. We think of our history in terms of a few ir entors because that is what we are taught. The schools traditionally have not been able to port ıy the contributions of African Americans in an appropriate light. Given the breadth and diver ity of what we have accomplished throughout the Diaspora.

So there is a question of having a feeling about ourselves that we come from a people who have achieved and still achieve. We feel good about ourselves as members of the African Diaspora with a root in Africa. And those feelings of almost -- almost being anchorless, of floating without this link to our past. This link to something we can feel good about, I think is an issue that impacts in a negative way on our ability to first of all as individuals, achieve and also in our interpersonal relationships, among ourselves and with other groups.

So there is no question to me that an understanding of our history, our culture, the contributions that we have made and the cultural characteristics of our people, which we have been able to maintain up to this point, are invaluable to self-esteem and to a positive sense of identity. What we are talking about here, in terms of an Afrocentric or an African-oriented curriculum, is a sense of self. A sense of self grounds it in something that is much more wonderful, much more rich than the Slavery Era, or even the more recent work that we have done to try to liberate ourselves.

Therefore it is important that since the schools have not been able to provide this kind of a curriculum that innovations, individuals and creative ways provide those opportunities while at the same time not taking the pressure off the schools, I don't think we can afford to wait until the schools respond in a way that we feel is productive for our communities. And this initiative of the Immersion Schools that I see as one of many attempts to inculcate those values and knowledge of ourselves.

RICHARD J. BROWN: The American Civil Liberties Union as well as The National Organization for Women were both involved in the court case in Detroit. Did this issue come up as one of concern Ms. Berrien?

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: Well the major issue in the Detroit case and the one that did lead to a court finding invalidating the program, was that it is a violation of Federal, Constitutional and Statutory Law, as well as a probable violation of the Michigan Civil Rights Law for schools to make pupil assignments based on sex.

The issue of the content of the curriculum and whether it incorporated Afrocentric elements was not at the core of that finding. The American Civil Liberties Union, and I'm sure Walteen will speak for NOW and about NOW, but the American Civil Liberties Union supports affirmative action programs, it supports efforts to promote equality in education and certainly, as has been suggested earlier, the recognition of the contribution of the peoples from whom all students are descended are vital parts of any curriculum that is to address the needs of those students.

I would say I certainly want to see my children be educated about their people and their heritage, but quite frankly I also think it is important that their peers and colleagues, whatever race should get that same education. I see that as not an act of charity or not an act of gratuity -- it's an act of survival. It's important to me that my colleague in the courtroom for example, be aware that it was a decade's long struggle for African Americans to be addressed in court by something other than their first names, which was the utter act of disrespect. To have elderly people be addressed by twenty-five year old white lawyers as Mary. And ultimately that battle had to go to the U.S. Supreme Court. Now I learned that in A Race and Racism in American Law course and in Black history courses in college. I certainly wish that everyone of my colleagues in the Bar and everyone who I appear before on the Bench was aware of that history as well. I think that's really why it's also important not only for our children, but for all children to be exposed to their history and to the experiences that have lead to where we are in this country, as well as to appreciate the richness of our culture and the contributions that we have made to this society and the world.

WALTEEN GRADY TRULEY: First of all, I would like to clarify something about organizational relationships. The NOW Legal Defense in Education Fund was a party to the suit and we are a separate organization from the National Organization for Women.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Yes.

WALTEEN GRADY TRULEY: I just want to make that point. As Ms. Berrien has said the specific nature of the curriculum itself was really not the point of discussion in the lawsuit. As the Federal Court judge said the issue before the court was the fact that Black girls are in crisis, as well as Black boys. A curriculum and a school strategy -- an educational strategy, should really address both genders. It would not be legal to exclude young women from a program that would address the needs of young men.

I think that the points that we have been discussing around the table with regard to the history of racism in the U.S. society and the history of the struggle for gender equality are very important. And I was particularly struck by the point that you made Roger about the importance of people understanding the racial history of the fight for women's equality. I often point out to my colleagues in the Women's Movement that it was only with the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 that political equality was acknowledged for African American women. So that in some ways our struggle for equality within the African American race is taking place in some ways in a whole different cycle than the fight for equality by white women.

I guess for me what is of particular concern in our discussions about this Immersion School concept is what notions of Afrocentrism guide the development of these schools. And I have a deep concern both because of personal experience in living in Africa for a number of years and recognizing that there is tremendous diversity among African peoples on a number of

questions including the question of the role of women in society. And I am deeply concerned about how in our haste to I think rightly understand our own history that we may grasp for romanticized notions about an African past which may or may not have existed and may or may not exist today. And when you asked the question about the kind of historical development of the Immersion School concept I think that is extremely important and I think we need to know more about that.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Could I -- I should go back and just expand a bit for our audience your point about which may or may not be the history of the past?

WALTEEN GRADY TRUELY: I guess I would simply like to say that in talking with some of the key writers on the concept of Afrocentrism about this point, about the role of women in an Afrocentric approach to teaching, I have not heard responses which reassure me about how questions of gender and family would be discussed. I think we need a lot more discussion of that particular point in addressing the curriculum in context.

HON. ROGER L. GREEN: I agree with her. I want to be clear that one of the reasons that we were determined to name the school that we're going to open up in September, Ujamaa -- was because we thought it had the broadest kind of definition and that it stood for familihood. It would, in fact, reflect our desire to create a school that would be co-educational, though it would also have some gender specific programming in it. When we spoke to the importance of gender specific programming we felt that this program had to be aggressively anti-sexist. Even in terms of the historical programming, [some] classes that would be attended both by young men and young women. When we look at African American history, one of the things that we would focus on, particularly during the period of enslavement in this country - which

is central, is the struggle to maintain the family. That is documented. Central to that were some customs that we had such as jumping the broom. Young men and young women in spite of laws that forbade them from being married, locked arms together and they jumped the broom. We wanted to talk about that within the context of our curriculum.

Also, I agree with the notion, that what you are suggesting -- [the] concept of "Silver Bullet Egyptology" is not what we wanted to project within our curriculum. What we were talking about was not only a critical analysis of our history but also movement towards cultural development that our students would come out of there with an understanding that though there are some good things in our cultural there are also some questionable things and things that we must overcome. We've got to move forward. And so that's really what we've been talking about.

And again focusing on the question of sexism. One of the things that we've determined to do is through the development of the extended school year. For instance is to have a summer academy program that would be named after Sister Ella Baker. And to talk about the role that Fanny Lou Hamer played and Septima Clark and Daisy Bates in the formulation of the struggle for civil rights during the 1960s. And we felt that that's critical and that we would do this aggressively.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Michael.

MICHAEL WEBB: In addition to the legal issues that have been raised and the issues of justification for even having such an Afrocentric approach, I think it is important, to further complicate the discussion, -- by saying that there are various kinds of approaches used in these programs. There is no class called an Afrocentric or a male immersion or -- there are no classes

of these programs. These programs vary if you look at what Detroit is doing, you look here at what is going on in New York, you look at Tampa, Atlanta, Baltimore you find different elements. And one of the issues in trying to understand how these schools work and the impact that these schools have on kids is that we don't know because there is no class of schools with common characteristics. What one person means by Afrocentric may not be the same as another. So we have to understand that there is diversity even in the Movement.

HON. ROGER L. GREEN: And, there is debate.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Absolutely. Absolutely. We're going to take a break soon, but I want to set up that I want to talk about gender specific schools. I think that is a big issue which many professionals and parents are concerned about. So when we do return let's talk about that.

[BREAK]

RICHARD J. BROWN: Alright. Gender. Let me preface my question with the fact that the issue obviously arose in Detroit. It has arisen in other communities. Why is this an issue, gender? Are -- you know going back particularly looking at the V.M.I. Case where there is a lengthy deposition by David Reissman in terms of single sex schools -- would students in a single sex situation learn more because of differences in learning styles or ability to learn in a situation where "co-edism" might not be the best?

HON. ROGER L. GREEN: Co-edism (LAUGHTER)

RICHARD J. BROWN: That is like the "Silver Bullet Egyptology." Why don't you just start off (referring to Ms. Berrien).

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: Well I think the core of the struggle for legal equality for women has been countering stereotypes. Some of those stereotypes have even been proffered in certain situations as things that help women. For example, at one period of time it was believed that certain activity would harm women's reproductive capacity and therefore they shouldn't engage in it. Whether it was certain work, work hours etc. Over time, it became clear that even the so-called benign efforts to keep women in a particular place in society had the effect of limiting their access to many opportunities in society, undermine their efforts for equality in many forms in society, and stereotypes however they were motivated, have the problem of categorizing everyone as being a particular way, and limiting their opportunities accordingly.

We found for example in the year since Title IX was enacted -- Title IX are the educational amendments of 1972 that has substantially opened up intercollegiate athletic participation for women -- that any of the assumptions that existed for years about what women could and couldn't do in terms of athletics were wrong. It was a matter of exposure, it was a matter of involvement, opportunity to compete with equally skilled competitors who had trained for a lifetime. But for years it went unquestioned that women could not do certain athletic things.

For years it was believed that women could not participate in particular professions. For example, the legal profession and a judicial decision found that women should not be lawyers because of their different constitution, they weren't suited for it. So, I think that in talking about why this law exists, we've got to understand that history. We've got to understand that stereotyping has negatively affected women. It has limited their options. It has limited their

opportunities. And it has undermined the effort to obtain legal and social and political equality in this country. So any stereotype, including stereotypes that particular learning styles apply to women, but not to men are troubling to us.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Let me just follow that up with -- in terms of the Immersion Schools in terms of Detroit or Milwaukee -- is it other than a legal issue, what would be wrong with an all male type program?

WALTEEN GRADY TRUELY: Could I kind of jump in here?

RICHARD J. BROWN: Sure. (LAUGHTER)

WALTEEN GRADY TRUELY: Because I've had the opportunity to review some of the limited research admittedly that is available on this question. What I find particularly interesting about some research that I reviewed that was done by Dr. Valerie Lee at the University of Michigan was that while there was not, while there were patterns of high achievement in single sex schools, one of the things that she noted was that there was also a rise in anti-female attitudes on the part of male students in all male environments. And that very often their adult male teachers encouraged the development of the kind of stereotyping that Jackie is talking about. And I think that it is critically important to continue to put this question in a historical context -- and that historical context includes the way we conceptualize public education in this country. The fact that we have not only intellectual and academic goals for our educational system, but that we also have social goals. I think that's what we were talking about earlier when Roger was talking about the concept of cultural democracy. I think that particular perspective on what it is we are or should be trying to achieve in designing a public education system that's going to develop young people to confront both the personal challenges and the

social challenges that they are going to have to face in order to be high functioning adults is where we need to keep the focus.

Researchers talk very often about the advantages of creating kind of safe haven environments for particular groups in our society. And we value historically Black colleges for that reason. We value single sex private colleges, but an important distinction exist between those kinds of institutions and the goals of a public education system.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Roger.

HON. ROGER L. GREEN: I differ a little bit. I think that one of the things that we also need to be mindful of in our culture is the whole question of choice, you know. And that I think that it is possible though it has to be done very vigilantly to create some programming that is gender specific and is also clearly not sexist in its approach. And doesn't empower sexual behavior particularly amongst young men.

I also think that there may be some unique needs that young women have and that young [men] have, particularly coming out of economically disadvantaged areas that are predominately populated by people of color. And I think that's a reality. And that perhaps among other things the goal of educators is not to be so locked into a rigid social engineering that we lose sight of the necessity of addressing those populations as well. In the school that we're talking about opening in September for instance, we do think that it would be appropriate in some cases to have gender specific programming particularly around areas of human sexually, male social responsibility, female social responsibility and family life skills. But, again to do it in a way that is not locked into some of the more anti-social behavior that many of the adults in our society have in fact reinforced.

Now this is going to be difficult, you know if we do this -- it will be difficult precisely because of what you've said. Because we have adult men who come to many school with certain contradictions that they have not overcome yet. Now we hope to address that by working with the Center for Women's Development and several other women's groups so that we can confront that, so our teachers can confront it. We do think that it is important for our young men, and even our young women, to be placed in some programs in which they're encouraged to bond together as young women and as young men. For the purpose of coming back out into the larger society and working together in a way that is socially responsible. And, so I think that's important again because when we look at the dissolution of our family structure -- particularly as it relates to what's happening with the young men . . . even questions of violence. Much of it is directly related to the questions of sexism, machismo -- that have to be overcome. We do think programming is needed where they are integrated with the young women and also female faculty. It is important for our men to challenge these contradictions head-on.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Okay. Michael do you have any comment on this?

MICHAEL WEBB: [Yes]

[INTERRUPTION]

RICHARD J. BROWN: I'm gonna let Michael respond.

MICHAEL WEBB: Well, I just wanted to say that even Title IX does affirm that there is a value to single sex institutions and does affirm their right to existence, even though it puts them in a historical context. In other words, if these are historically single gender institutions and they have -- there's some validity to that. There is some affirmation in law -- that there is a value for single gender institutions.

The other point I wanted to make is that I think that we're in extraordinary times. If we are thinking about reclaiming our communities and saving our families then we have to look at extraordinary measures and this being one. There may be other measures, but I think we have to discuss the Immersion School and the whole idea of culture in education in the frame work of where we are today. I think it's possible for us to see that we are in a tremendous crisis in our community and that there are some factors that have impacted on young African American males and have created a tremendous problem for us in our community, as well as the community and society in general. I think that our discussion has to be placed in that context.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Absolutely. In the Detroit agreement it's stipulated that teachers could not be assigned according to gender. What is the implication of this in terms of the original program idea? Either in Detroit or elsewhere where it is strongly felt that African American male adult teachers should be role models and teachers in those classrooms in these African American Immersion Schools? Can we begin with you? (Referring to Ms. Berrien)

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: Well, first of all as far as Detroit, I would like to clarify that it was the ACLU of Michigan that was involved in that litigation which is a different office from mine.

However, I think that the question of the gender and what role it should play in teacher assignment is one that returns to the issue that Walteen raised earlier. We are not arguing that there may not be benefits to particular aspects of the curriculum changes, teachers incorporating more gender diversity among the teaching core. What we've said is that girls, as well as boys could benefit from that.

HON. ROGER L. GREEN: Right.

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: I believe that everyone at the table has said they have concerns about the family, they have concerns about the lack of role models within the community.

One common theme among proponents of these programs has been that there's a need for more African American male role models in the classroom. Sometimes programs have attempted to incorporate or address that need through mentorship programs etcetera. I believe that our modification of that would be that it's not only young men and boys who need to see men in nurturing positions, in caring positions, teaching, educating, in leadership positions.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Right.

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: And similarly boys, as well as girls need to see women who are strong . . . aggressive, able to care for others, nurturing, loving, etcetera.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Right.

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: Going back to this issue of stereotypes, the important thing within the educational system is that the publically financed educational system does not reinforce and in fact enshrine those stereotypes that have traditionally undermined equality principles, but that instead it counteract those. And for those reasons, given both the existence of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as the Educational Act -- both prohibit using gender alone as a basis for determining a teacher assignment. It does not mean you can't do affirmative action efforts to try to diversify your teaching core. Where school systems have identified a need for additional male teachers or for additional African American teachers or Phillipino teachers or whatever, they have not only the right, but the duty to try to diversify those teaching cores.

WALTEEN GRADY TRUELY: I think the reality that Detroit and many school systems around the country are dealing with is that there is simply not sufficient numbers of African American males in the eligible pools or in even the pools of people -- in the pipeline as we say -- to fill the kinds of roles that we're talking about. What many of the programs seem to do is to draw on volunteer mentors who will come into the schools.

I think that while volunteers in education are enormously important, I think as a teacher I'm particularly concerned about the notion that volunteers can come in and play a role which is essentially a professional role. I would very strongly advocate for the encouragement of men particularly, African American men to become teachers. I think it's critically important.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Let me put a tag on that [comment] related to your earlier comment about systemic changes. Given the minimum numbers of African American teachers nationally, and that no time soon will there ever be sufficient to be teachers in all of the classrooms in the country or in predominately African American schools, systemically what needs to be done in order to meet that need?

WALTEEN GRADY TRUELY: I think it's an excellent question and it's a tremendously important one. I think that states around the country are currently grappling with all kinds of efforts at restructuring education as a whole. Interestingly enough, questions of equity on the level that we're talking about are not fully part of those discussions about school restructuring. I think these are the kinds of questions that should be at the center of those discussions, and are not.

I would certainly say that many people who are not going into teaching because the profession is not rewarded. I think that it is very interesting that some of the African American males who are currently teaching or working in the New York City school system, for example had their educations funded by large foundations following the Vietnam War, who saw the need

and saw an opportunity to provide support for African American men. And similar -- we need those kinds of efforts to provide the kind of support and incentives to get more African American men into the pipeline.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Fine. Roger.

HON. ROGER L. GREEN: Well, I was going to say when the school that we propose -- one of the reasons that we've linked it to Medgar Evers College is because it has an education department and it is our hope that we can develop an affirmative action program that would attract more African American males to this profession. But I think as Jackie was saying, one of the main reasons that this hasn't occurred is also cultural and because of stereotypes. Because the teaching profession is defined as essentially a nurturing profession. And so it is one of the areas of -- a profession that's engaged in socialization of children that again has been stereotyped as being segmented for women only. I think that's one of the things that we want to challenge. But I do think that the Michigan lawsuit can pose some difficulties, for instance if I wanted to assign a female instructor to a shop class that taught mechanics and/or taught carpentry. And to ensure that the young men in that class had a first hand view of a non-stereotypical professional. I think that my sense is that, and you can correct me if I am wrong, that if the conclusions of the Michigan Decision are drawn too narrowly by the members of the School Board there, that could be prevented because that in effect would've been an assignment of a female teacher for a specific class. Am I correct?

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: Well, the key question with affirmative action engaging the legality or the constitutionality of affirmative action efforts are whether they promote or whether they counteract history of exclusion and history of segregation. I would argue that does not...

HON. ROGER L. GREEN: Okay.

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: Promote the historic exclusion of segregation. I would also just like to add we must again return to the question of what impact policy at the Federal level has had on the composition of the teaching pool today.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Federal or State level?

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: Exactly. The access to higher education by Black students male and female has plummeted over the last decade. And the Urban League in The State of Black America has reported on that trend annually. And without that access to higher education the opportunity to increase the numbers of Black men in the teaching profession is greatly minimized. And we really have to address that as a public policy issue.

RICHARD J. BROWN: I would agree. Michael you had a comment.

MICHAEL WEBB: I was just going to say that I think that the certification of teachers that's in place right now serves more of a gatekeeping function to keep many people out. Ah there is no evidence, there's no research that I know of that conclusively shows that passing the NTE or the Teachers' Certification Examination creates a better classroom teacher. Yet and still there are many people with a variety of skills that have been proven in the workplace. People have worked as professors, as doctors, as lawyers as every other profession as well, who are excluded from teaching because they have not taken a course leading to the National Teachers Examination.

WALTEEN GRADY TRUELY: That's an excellent point.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Yeah, yeah. In summary I would like each of you to comment on what, what recommendations in addition to the Immersion School if that is one, would you make to help alleviate, diminish the state that the African American male is in today? Or female? You will begin Michael?

MICHAEL WEBB: Sure, and I think that the -- that your addition to that question was the right thing to say. That we, we are a people, a people comprising of males and females. And the issues that are important for males are equally important for females, you know in the African American community.

I would hope that even the issue of the single gender school would be looked at in terms of the pedigochie. In other words, it is not enough for me that kids are in an all male or all female class or that there's an afrocentric, whatever that means curriculum. To me, the issue is what is the quality of learning? What are the opportunities for young people to develop the kinds of skills that we need now and that increasingly we are told we are going to need? What are the facilities and resources? Do the teachers care about the students? Are the teachers prepared to go in the classroom and work with the students to help them develop skills. These are the issues to me that are paramount importance and when I think that the single gender school and the Immersion School is an approach and under certain circumstances can be an effective approach. I think the more reasonable question to ask is what kind of instruction -- what kind of learning opportunities are our kids going to receive in the classroom.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Fine. Ms. Berrien.

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: First of all, I believe we must look at the impact of early points in life and early things in life. The impact of poverty. The impact of limited parental education which is another reason that I think that it is a mistake to look at this as a male issue.

The fact is that many of these males will be raised by -- alone by women. Many of whom will suffer from the same limited educational opportunities that will come to plague their sons eventually or their daughters.

We know some things that work. Headstart works and the recent expansion of that program will probably contribute immeasurably to preventing some of the deficits that we see now. We also know that enhancing life options works. People who think that they don't have any opportunities beyond the block, or beyond what they know now do not forego some of the risks that we see young people engaging in. If we open up those options through public policy and put the resources...

RICHARD J. BROWN: Um, hum.

JACQUELINE BERRIEN: to make it happen, I think we can see changes without resorting to discrimination.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Fine. Very quickly because time is almost up.

WALTEEN GRADY TRUELY: Well certainly promoting strategies that will result in a full employment economy will have a great impact. I think that we all have that family focus. We talked about the crisis that exist on the family. The fact is that we need to be promoting scholarships for African Americans and not doing the reverse. We have to have flexible schooling -- school years and longer days and not the current cuts to public education that we are seeing.

HON. ROGER L. GREEN: Well I think -- I think our over arching agenda has to be clear. I think that as we approach this decade and we get, you know, reach the 21st century that the human rights movement must be redefined. I think it should be refined at least as a human

rights agenda for children and youth. That we need an arc of protection around our children and youth and as the international community has declared through the declaration of rights for children that should be defined as a principle of first call. That all governments regardless of whether they are in a surplus economy or a deficit economy should provide for the basic survival, protection and development of children and youth. And that's a fundamental position that I think that all of us should assume for all children, regardless of what their gender is.

RICHARD J. BROWN: Roger Green, Ms. Truly, Ms. Berrien, [Dr.] Michael Webb, I want to thank you very much for being part of this roundtable. I think that what was discussed here will benefit our audience. Thank you very much.

The views of the panelists do not necessarily reflect those of the National Urban League, Inc., Paragon Cable Manhattan or their sponsors.

BIOGRAPHIES
OF
PANELISTS

BIOGRAPHY

JACQUELINE A. BERRIEN

Jacqueline A. Berrien is currently Staff Counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, Women's Rights Project. Prior to joining to the ACLU's Women's Rights Project, Ms. Berrien served as Staff Counsel in this organization's National Legal Office.

Ms. Berrien earned her Juris Doctorate at Harvard Law School, where she distinguished herself as a Wassertein Public Interest Fellow. She has received honors as a Cora Warren Fellow from the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. and was General Editor of the Harvard Civil Rights for Civil Liberties Law Review. Ms. Berrien was also distinguished as a Harry S. Truman Scholar.

Ms. Berrien's latest work can be found in the forthcoming, 3rd edition of Women and the Law. Her contribution to this work is titled *Pregnancy and Drug Use: Incarceration Is Not The Answer*.

Ms. Berrien also serves as a member of the Committee on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar of the Association of the City of New York and is a volunteer for New York City Schools Lawyer in the Classroom Program.

BIOGRAPHY

WALTEEN GRADY TRUELY

Walteen Grady Truely has worked in the field of educational equity for fifteen years. Since July, 1990 she has directed the Project on Equal Education Rights of the National Organization of Women Legal Defense and Education Fund. During her 6 1/2 years as Gender Equity Coordinator for the New York City Public Schools, she co-chaired the Chancellor's Task Force on Sex Equity, a network of equity advocates and educational administrators. She also conducted awareness workshops and technical assistance sessions for education program administrators, teachers, parents and students on gender equity issues in mathematics and science, career education, managing diversity in the classroom and promoting non-biased instruction.

She is a member of the steering committee of the National Coalition for Sex Equity in Education and a member of Administrative Women in Education.

Ms. Grady Truely has served as consultant to the Council on Interracial Books for Children, the Feminist Press, the Women's Action Alliance Nonsexist Child Development Project, the Mid-Atlantic Center for Sex Equity, and the Connecticut State Department of Education.

She is a former Associate Director of the Women's Educational Equity Act Coordination Project and a Program Officer of the Educational Equity Institute at the American University in Washington, DC.

Ms. Grady Truely is a member of the board of the Fannie Lou Hammer Educational Organization. She was a delegate to the International Year of the Child United Nations Conference for the Women's International Democratic Federation in Moscow and the Mid-Decade Forum on Women in Copenhagen.

Walteen Grady Truely holds a Master of Arts in Education with a concentration in African and African American Studies from the State University of New York at Albany and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Philosophy from Michigan State University.

BIOGRAPHY

ROGER L. GREEN

Assemblyman Roger L. Green was first elected to the New York State Assembly in 1980 representing the 57th Assembly District in Kings County.

He has authored numerous bills that have been designed to positively restore the social cultural and economic strength of his community. Of particular interest to Assemblyman Green has been the development of legislation, policies and programs which impact on the lives of children and youth.

Specifically, Assemblyman Green:

- was Legislative founder of the Latimer-Woods Economic Development Corporation, which is a service and developmental agency named after the Black industrialists Lewis Latimer and Granville T. Woods;

- Co-authored legislation establishing a statewide Prenatal Care Assistance Program to fight infant mortality and low birth weight;

- was author of the legislation which established the Martin Luther King Institute on Non-Violence;

- Legislative founder of the Jackie Robinson Center for Physical Culture, which is a not for profit organization that offers comprehensive educational and youth development services for over 3,000 youth in Central Brooklyn.

BIOGRAPHY

MICHAEL WEBB

Michael Webb is currently Director of Education and Career Development, National Urban League, Inc. He was born in Buffalo, New York. As the recipient of a Buffalo Urban League scholarship, Mr. Webb attended St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York, where he majored in English and Ethnic Studies.

Mr. Webb received a Master of Arts Degree from San Francisco State University in Educational Technology and a Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Administration and International Educational Development from Teachers College at Columbia University located in New York City.

Mr. Webb has worked as a teacher, researcher, writer and administrator. He has held research positions with the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development and the Institute for Urban and Minority Education, Teachers College, Columbia University. The author of more than 20 articles, Michael Webb's writing has appeared in *Business Monthly*, *Equity and Choice*, and *PTA Today*. He is also the author of many monographs on education.

He has a special interest in African studies and spent three years living in Africa as a teacher in the Gumel Advanced Teachers College, Nigeria, and as a program specialist at American University in Cairo. Mr. Webb also directs the International Youth Leadership Institute, Teachers College, Columbia University, an overseas study program for African American and Latino/high school students.

BIOGRAPHY

RICHARD J. BROWN

Richard J. Brown is the current Director of the National Urban League African American Adolescent Male Development Center. Prior to joining the National Urban League, Mr. Brown was a Coordinator of Drop Out Prevention Programs for the Federation Employment and Guidance Service in New York City.

Mr. Brown, an educator and administrator, has an extensive background in the field of education and youth services. He directed an extremely innovative "Upward Bound" national pilot program while working as a lecturer in Urban Education at Wesleyan University, in Middletown Connecticut. Mr. Brown also served as Deputy Commissioner of the Connecticut State Department of Children and Youth. Moreover, Mr. Brown distinguished himself as the Vice President for Administration of the State University of New York College at Old Westbury.

Mr. Brown received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Western Connecticut State University and a Masters Degree in Educational Administration and Social Policy from Harvard University.

AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENT MALE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

History

The National Urban League founded in 1910, is a premier civil rights and social service organization headquartered in New York City, with 114 affiliates in 34 states, and the District of Columbia.

The mission of the National Urban League is to assist African Americans in the achievement of social and economic equality. The National Urban League implements its mission through advocacy, research, program services, and bridge building.

Concerned with the increase in pregnancy among unmarried youth, the National Urban League and its affiliate network have vigorously sought new and expanded program initiatives to reduce the incidence of "children having children."

In 1985, the National Urban League started its first initiative, the Male Responsibility Program, which encouraged and supported affiliates in the development of programs for African American males emphasizing pregnancy prevention. A second initiative, which was integral to the success of the Male Responsibility Program, was a nationwide media education and information campaign, designed to heighten African American male awareness of their responsibilities in preventing unwanted pregnancies and too-early parenting. Five years of Male Responsibility Program development experience has demonstrated that lasting change can only take place when comprehensive services meet the multiple concerns of young males.

African American Adolescent Male Development Center

The National Urban League responded to the call for more comprehensive adolescent male services by creating the African American Adolescent Male Development Center.

The African American Adolescent Male Development Center, is funded through a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The center serves as a national clearinghouse for applied research on African American males ages 11-16 and provides information about existing programs that encourage the healthy development of this significant population and their families.

The staff of the center, with the assistance of the center's national advisory committee, produces position papers encouraging changes in public policy planning which will have a positive impact on young African American males.

Through the distribution of research information, the provision of technical assistance, and proven program strategies, the African American Adolescent Male Development Center expects to multiply the number of successful male focus programs nationwide. Also, by providing three program models: mentoring, community service, and academic skills development, which have proved effective with the African American inner-city youth served by National Urban League affiliates, the likelihood of positive outcomes will be increased. These programmatic support structures assist affiliate program personnel in helping adolescent African American males enhance their self-identity, develop skills for improved intellectual competence, and create the necessary plans to increase their life options.

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